

Hong Kong, Global Citizenship & the UN Sustainability Literacy Test

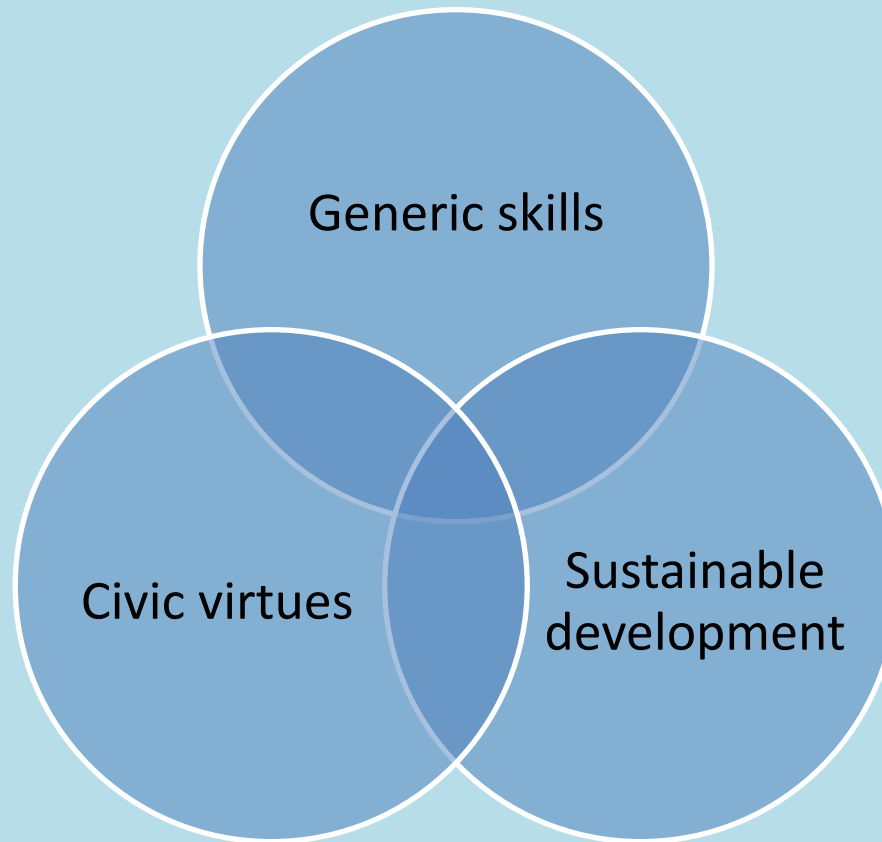
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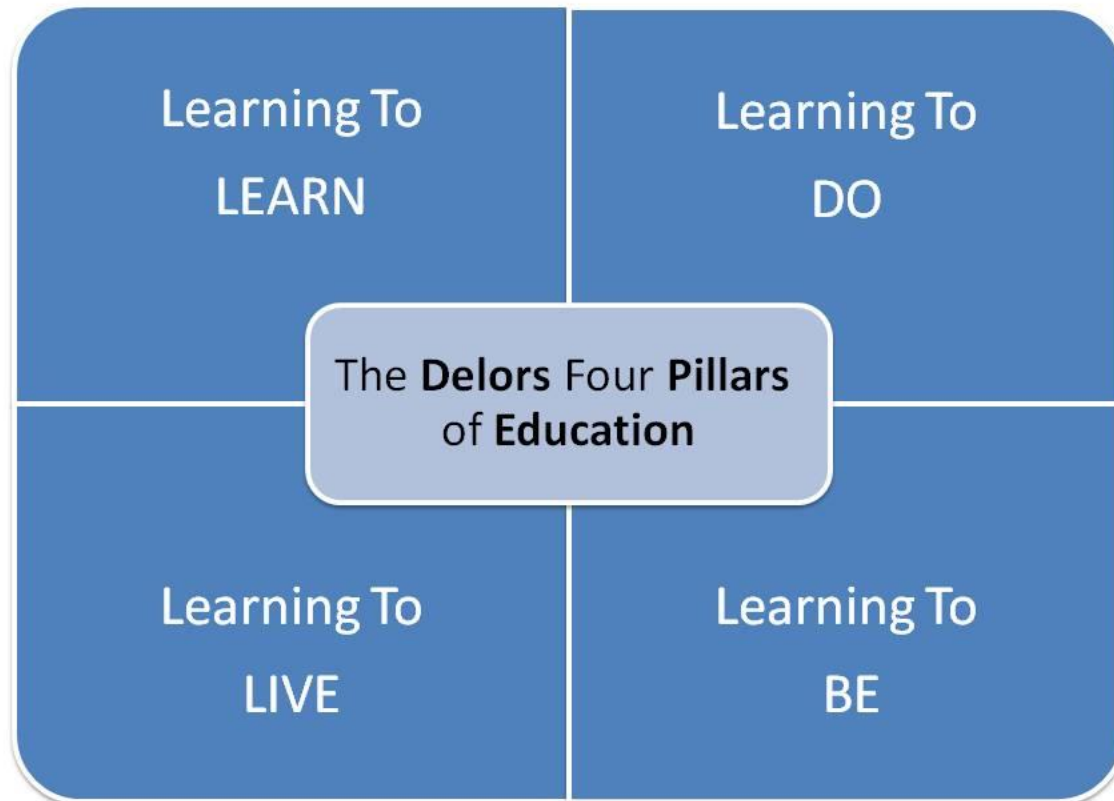
Introduction

- What is global citizenship education?



What is global citizenship education?

Generic skills needed for the global economy



What is global citizenship education?

“Compassionate global citizenship” (Nussbaum, 2001)

- Civic virtues
 - Compassion
 - Altruism
 - Volunteerism
 - Empathy



What is global citizenship education?

Education for sustainable development

- Environmental education
- “eco-pedagogy”
- “pedagogy of place”
(Gruenwald, 2003)
- “eco-citizenship”



Sustainability Literacy Test (SLT)



The Rio+20 Conference highlighted the role that Higher Education Institutions bear in the pursuit of sustainable development. One of the most relevant questions is now, how can universities be sure that they are producing sustainability literate graduates?

The "Sustainability Literacy Test" will be a tool for the assessment and verification of the sustainability literacy of HEI students when they graduate...

[Learn more »](#)



The Sustainability Literacy Test is a Multiple Choice Questionnaire. 50 MCQ's are randomly selected out of a wide range covering the basic knowledge on sustainable development and individual and Organisational sustainability and responsibility. Of those questions, 2/3 are aimed at the Supra/International level (global warming for instance) and 1/3 aimed at the national/regional level (i.e. local regulations and laws, culture and practices)...

Sustainability Literacy Test (SLT)

- Piloted in 2014
- Higher education around the globe
- 50 MC questions
 - 2/3 international; 1/3 national/local
 - Environment, social, economic, and political issues
 - Regulation of business, human rights law, etc.
- HK participating in the pilot and refinement

Outline

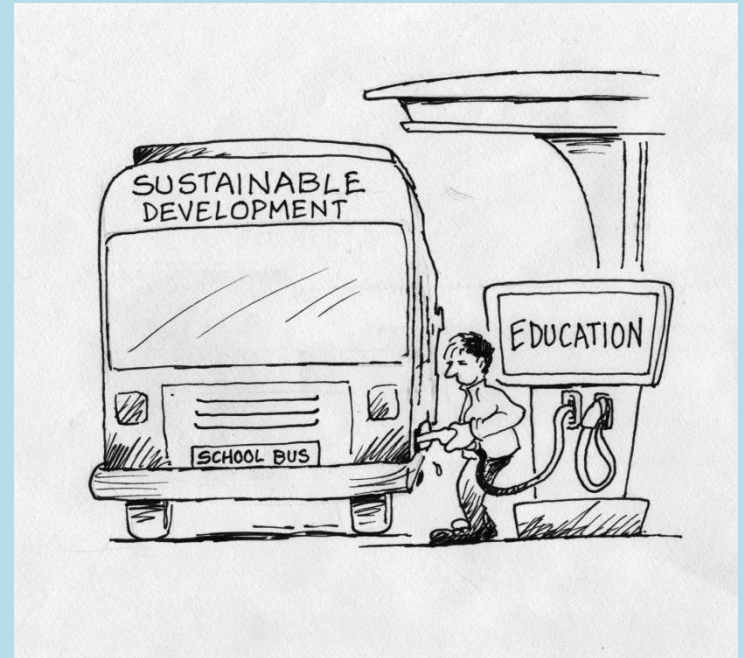
Main question:

What are the opportunities and challenges for using the Sustainable Literacy Test in Hong Kong?

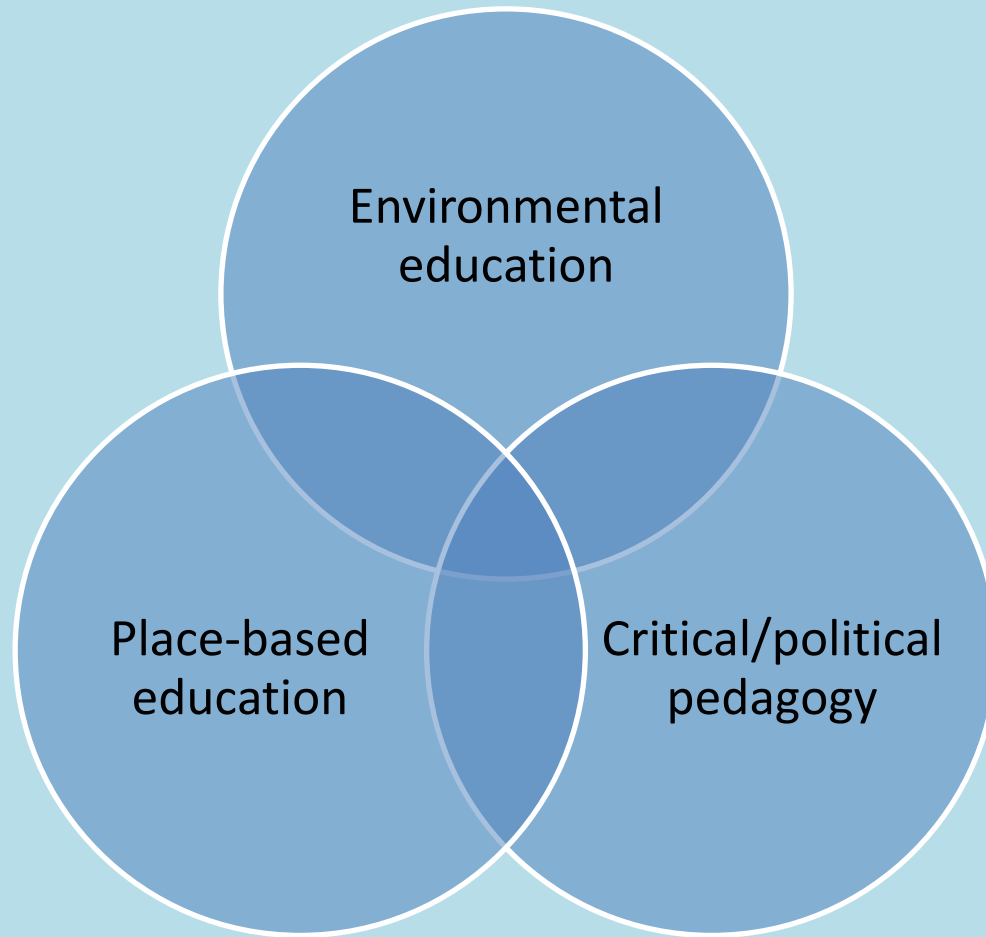
- Perspective of Education for Sustainable Development / Global Eco-Citizenship
 - What is ESD?
 - What is Global Eco-Citizenship?
- Use lens of ESD 1 / ESD 2 to evaluate
- Recommendations for using the test in HK...

What is Education for Sustainable Development? (ESD)

- Originally a policy initiative, “top down”
 - Education as a tool
 - Drives development
- Then a curriculum
 - Sustainability
 - (Environmental)
 - From global to local



What is ESD? (Gruenwald)



What is ESD?

- Environmental education
 - Learn about the natural environment
 - Conservation and ecology
- Place-based education
 - Learn through experiences
 - Change your environment by acting upon it
- Critical/political pedagogy
 - Solve social justice problems in your area
 - Empower students

What is Global Eco-Citizenship?

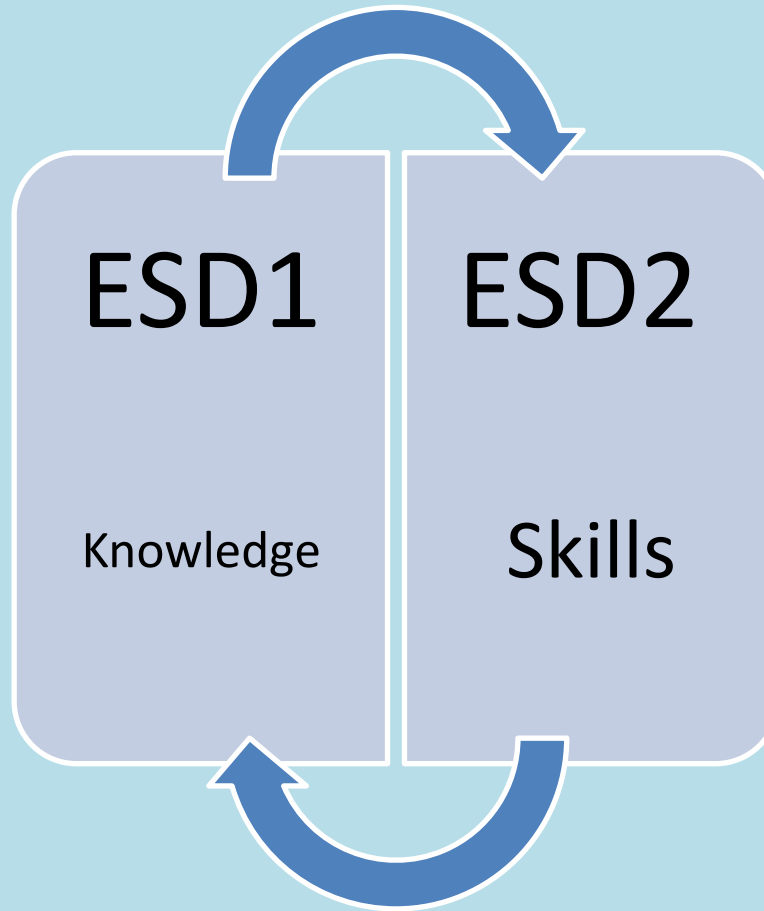
- Civic rights and responsibilities on a global scale
- Informal, but practical interconnection to all others worldwide

What is Global Eco-Citizenship?

Problem:

- What do/should individuals act at a global scale?
 - Recycle, buy eco-friendly products? (Maniates, 2001)
 - Individuals should also act institutionally
 - “Caring about” the environment not always effective... (Jackson, 2014)

ESD 1 / 2 (Vare & Scott 2007)



ESD 1 / 2

ESD1: Knowledge

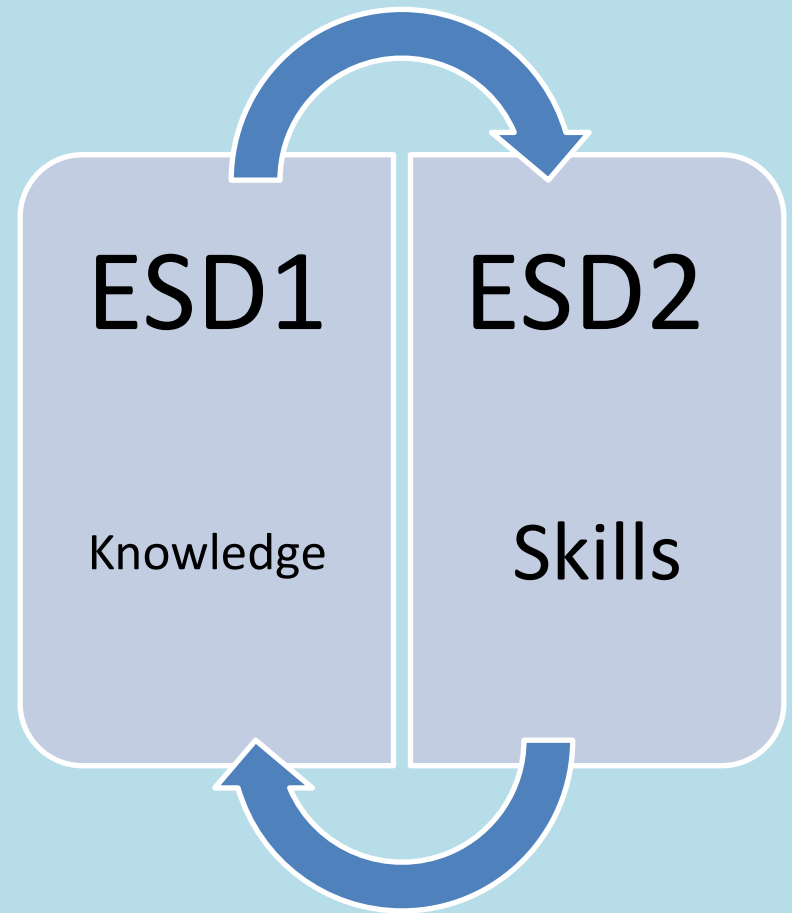
- What are the facts?
- Once we understand the science, we know what to do

ESD2: Skills

- We do not have all the answers
 - The world is dynamic so we always need to know more
 - The challenges are not just about data but politics
- (Vare & Scott, 2007)

ESD 1 / 2

- Learn knowledge and skills
- Complementary tasks
- Identify new challenges
- Identify new knowledge
- Identify new skills
- Continuous cycle of interaction
- More sustainable ESD!



Sustainability Literacy Test (SLT)

- Limitation: Only test student knowledge:

Even though these tools [for measuring values, attitudes, and skills] are useful, they can't be, by nature, common from one HEI to another. The SLT aims to be universally applicable, regardless of discipline pursued, study focus, or location.

(SLT, 2013)

Sustainability Literacy Test (SLT)

- Example:

Country parks take up how much of HK's total land area?

a) 10%

b) 20%

c) 40%

d) 60%

(HK Local Database, 2014)

Sustainability Literacy Test (SLT)

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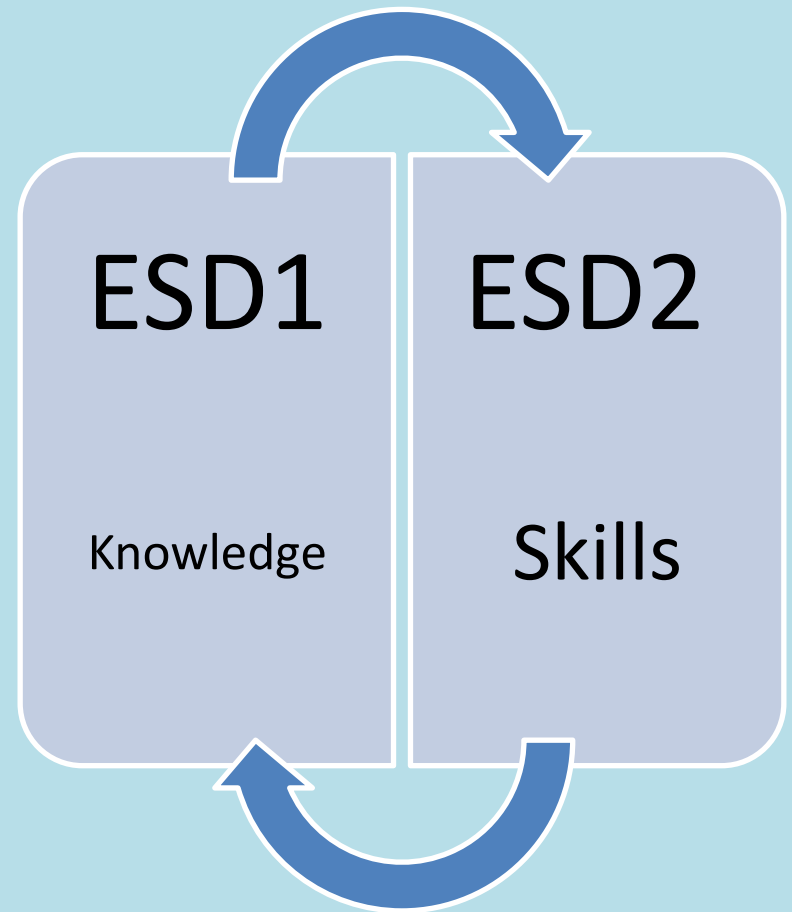
My involvement with the SLT

Last academic year:

- HKU faculty developed local pilot questions
 - Faculty from education and biology/earth science and staff from the sustainability office
 - Developed and revised questions last year
- All other HEIs joined for administering pilot
 - Group agreed upon open format for inviting students/requiring or encouraging them in classes
 - Currently in evaluation and review phase

Analysis of SLT

- How does the SLT succeed and fail according to the ESD1 / ESD2 framework?
- What are the challenges & possibilities from the view of ESD1/ ESD2?

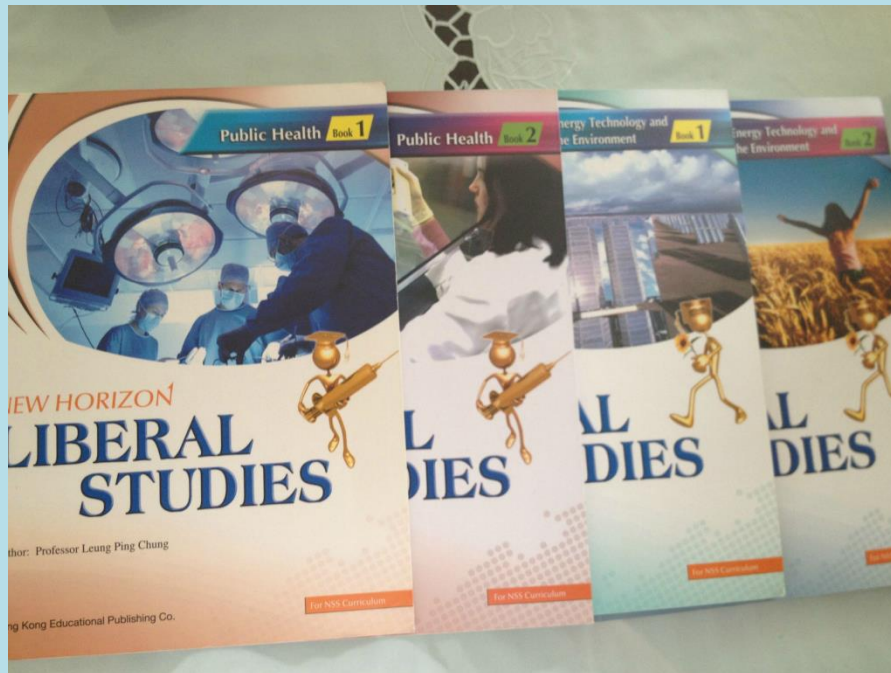


SLT: Great potential

- Gives visibility to *sustainability* as part of civic/education engagement in HE communities
 - Historically HK embraces market values, not sustainability
 - In education, environmental issues are disconnected from Social and political issues
 - Students motivated by certification and see themselves as global citizens



SLT: Great potential



SLT: Great potential

- A challenge, and an opportunity:
 - Reveals a gap between “minimal knowledge” and what students are learning!
 - Prompts educators to reflect on when/where this information should be taught
 - Liberal Studies? Nonformal education? Higher ed?
 - On the other hand, an external source of motivation, may not be relevant or ideal for HK

SLT: A challenge

- Objective knowledge is ESD1 only

[The SLT] should be complemented with other assessment tools on values and competencies necessary to create systemic changes for a sustainable future.

(SLT, 2014)

ESD1

Knowledge

What are
the facts?

Science tells
us what to
do


What happens if we don't have these other tools?

SLT: A challenge

- Presents sustainability information as apolitical, disconnected from social needs
- Individuals are the most important—assumes individuals' learning makes the difference instead of institutional change (scale bias)
- When measuring skills and attitudes is more challenging, it represents an easy fix
- SLT may dominate in a gap for ESD

SLT: A challenge

- Reform of education may revolve around SLT
 - Effective assessment must link to prior learning
- Global eco-citizenship conceived as knowledge only




WHY IT IS IMPORTANT ?

The Rio+20 Conference highlighted the role that Higher Education Institutions bear in the pursuit of sustainable development. One of the most relevant questions is now, how can universities be sure that they are producing sustainability literate graduates?

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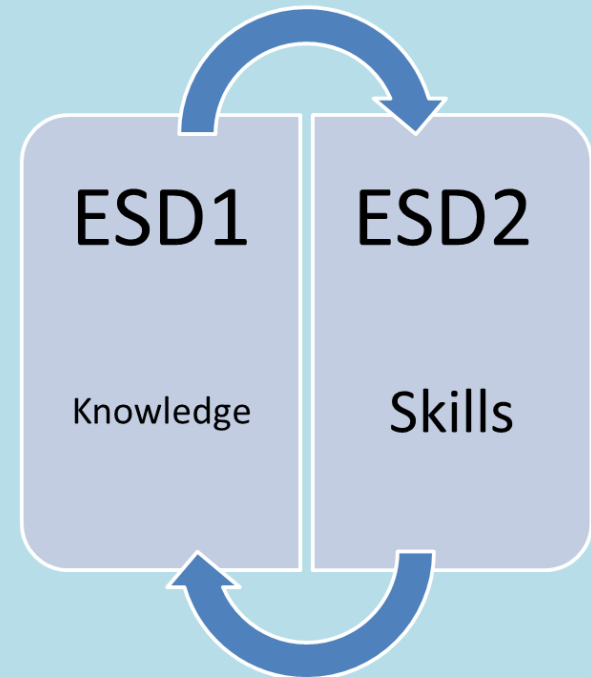
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HOW DOES IT WORK ?

The Sustainability Literacy Test is a Multiple Choice Questionnaire. 50 MCQ's are randomly selected out of a wide range covering the basic knowledge on sustainable development and individual and Organisational sustainability and responsibility. Of those questions, 2/3 are aimed at the Supra/International level (global warming for instance) and 1/3 aimed at the national/regional level (i.e. local regulations and laws, culture and practices)...

VS



Conclusion

Considered strengths & limits of SLT for ESD1/2:

- Strengths: HK students as global eco-citizens
 - Global values not just market values
 - Part of a global social movement to sustainability
- Strengths: Motivation to focus more on ESD
 - Identify new educational need to know

Conclusion

Considered strengths & limits of SLT for ESD1/2:

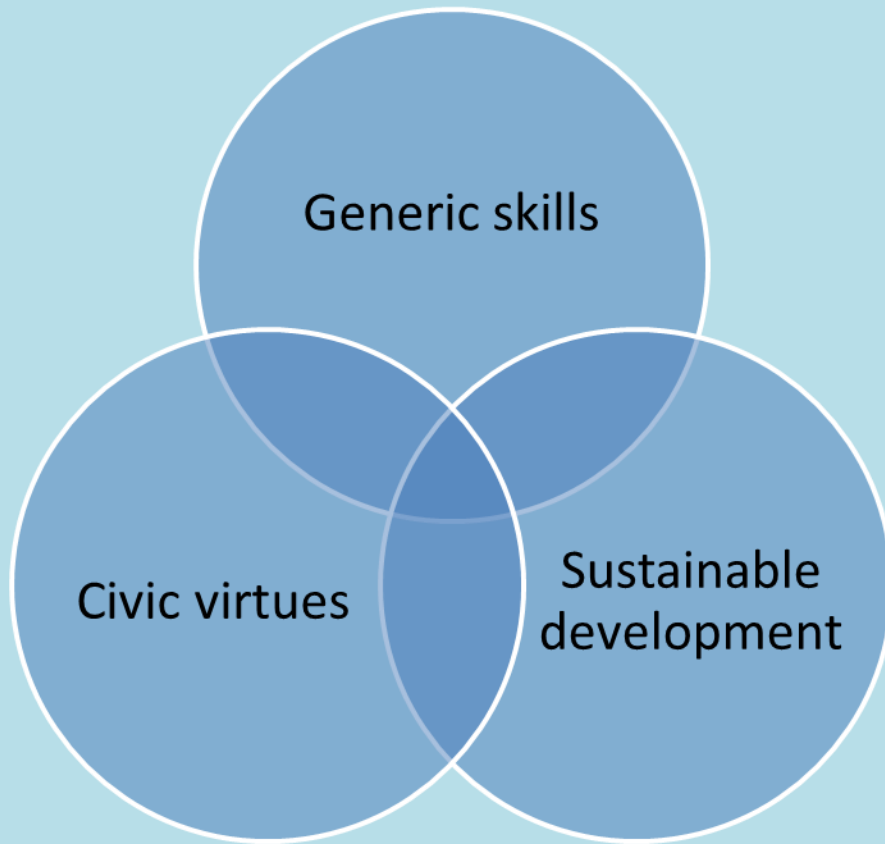
- Challenge: Takes an ESD1 approach
 - Considers knowledge the major problem of ESD
 - Abstract knowledge “out there” obscures agency
- Challenge: Lacking other tools, may dominate
 - Need to know defined in a limited way: Need ESD2

Conclusion

Recommendations

- HK educations must not use the test as the single means to assess ESD development
- Must consider local needs, to move away from exam-oriented/summative assessment format
- Must not forget ESD2:
 - Engage students in their place
 - Work to change attitudes and behaviors
- Civic education reconceived with ESD

A new possibility for MCE?



Thank you!

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